

PADM596 Research Methods for Public Managers

Fall 2013 7:00am – 9:30am Thursdays DSH 134

CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to present basic tools for professional analysis and scholarly inquiry. It provides students with skills and knowledge they will need to understand and effectively use various research methods. Specifically, we will begin the course by discussing basic concepts and components of a research project and then move on to issues and techniques in data collection and analysis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The following MPA core learning outcomes will be addressed in this course:

- 1. Students will analyze policies and programs by applying appropriate information technology and data management tools
- 2. Students will analyze policies and programs by applying appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative analysis methods

Thus, students who successfully complete the course are expected to leave with the ability to:

- Develop questions for applied research projects;
- Conduct original analysis of data (using software like SPSS) to address those questions;
- Understand the different types of data used most frequently by managers, policy analysts, and researchers in public administration;
- Learn when and how to use each analysis technique; and
- Appreciate the necessity of using clear and direct language to communicate research concepts and findings.

TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS

Required:

- 1. O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Taliaferro (2011). *Practical Research Methods for Nonprofit and Public Administrators* (referred to as "O'Sullivan et al." hereafter).
- 2. Cunningham and Aldrich (2012). *Using SPSS: An Interactive Hands-On Approach* (referred to as "Cunningham and Aldrich" hereafter).
- 3. A laptop computer with SPSS is required during 10/24-11/21.
- 4. Online access to the UNM Learn website (https://learn.unm.edu/) is needed in order to view lecture materials and performing in-class exercises, as well as for take-home exams.

Recommended:

- 1. Eller, Gerber, and Robinson (2013). Public Administration Research Methods: Tools for Evaluation and Evidence-Based Practice (**referred to as "Eller et al." hereafter**).
- 2. The newest APA Publication Manual (6th Edition).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance

Class attendance is required. Although attendance will only count 10 points of your final grade, it may significantly affect your performance in course assignments and exams. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain complete information on that class from another student in the course.

A maximum of two excused absences are allowed. After two missed classes, I will begin deducting attendance points for missed course sessions (one point for an absence). Excused absences include documented illnesses, deaths in the immediate family and other documented crises, call to active military or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. Accommodations for these excused absences will be made and will do so in a way that does not penalize any of you who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to any of you whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Please also note that you are expected to attend all course sessions on the scheduled time. Excessive lateness will be penalized.

Research Project

You will work in teams of four to conduct a research project based on primary or secondary data. The purpose of this project is to experience the whole process of framing research in public administration—defining research problems, getting data, constructing variables and hypotheses, running models, and interpreting output.

You will first write a preliminary research proposal (counts 20 points and is due on 10/17) that should include the following components:

- An introduction to your topic, including the significance of the study
- A clearly stated research question or questions
- A brief review of scholarly articles related to your research question(s)
- Research methods that will be used in your research, including:
 - o Sources of research data
 - Qualitative and/or quantitative methods you plan to use, and justification for the selection of your proposed research methods

After your proposal is approved by the instructor, you will then craft an approximate 20-page typed, double-spaced paper (counts 30 points and is due on 12/12) organized as follows:

- Introduction
 - Set the stage
 - State the problem/issue/purpose/rationale

- Literature Review
 - Theoretical framework/hypothesis
- Methodology
 - o Participants/materials
 - o Analytical procedure and techniques
- Results/Findings
- Discussion
 - Restate hypothesis
 - o Tie back to literature
 - o Larger implications
 - o Limitations
 - Directions for future research
- Conclusion (which can also be incorporated into the Discussion section)

Note: Research projects must be crafted according to the APA Publication Manual.

Exams

You will complete two take-home exams. These exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay type questions that will require you to apply the knowledge you've learned through your involvement in the course. Each exam is worth 20 points.

GRADING/EVALUATION

Attendance	10%
Preliminary Research Proposal	20%
Final Research Project	30%
Exams (x 2)	40%
Total	100%

A+	97-100%
A	93-96%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
В	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	0-62%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The importance of academic integrity can never be over-emphasized in any course. This course is no exception. Students should maintain the highest standards of academic integrity throughout the course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating in exams or assignments, etc. For the code of academic misconducts, please refer to the Dean of Students Office website (http://www.unm.edu/~doso/ja_codeofconduct.html).

DISABILITY STATEMENT

UNM makes every effort to accommodate students with disabilities. The Accessibility Services is dedicated to helping accommodate students with disabilities or special needs. It can be reached at (505) 277-3506. Students who have a disability or special need should also contact the instructor to make special arrangements in order to meet course requirements.

COURSE OUTLINE (*Available on UNM Learn https://learn.unm.edu/)

8/22: Course Introduction

8/29: What Is Research? Its Purposes and Ethical Concerns

- *Eller et al., Chapter 1
- ❖ O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 3

9/5: An Introduction to Key Concepts of Research

- O'Sullivan et al., Chapters 1 (pp.2-9 only)
- *Eller et al., Chapters 3 and 5

9/12: Reviewing Literature and Gathering Information as Starting Points in a Research Project

- *Eller et al., Chapter 4
- ❖ O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 4

9/19: Data Collection: Designing Research Interviews and Surveys

• O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 7

9/26: Data Collection: Selecting and Contacting Research Subjects

- O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 6
- *Eller et al., Chapter 7

10/3: Analyzing Interviews and Open-Ended Questions

- ❖ O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 10
- *Eller et al., Chapter 12

10/10: Fall Break

10/17: Midterm Exam

Preliminary Research Proposal Due

10/24: Analyzing Survey Data Using SPSS: An Introduction

Cunningham and Aldrich, Chapters 1-6

10/31: Analyzing Survey Data Using SPSS: Descriptive Statistics

- Cunningham and Aldrich, Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11
- O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 5 (recommended)

11/7: Analyzing Survey Data Using SPSS: Basic Tools for Hypothesis Testing (t Test and ANOVA)

- Cunningham and Aldrich, Chapters 12 (pp. 98-102), 13 (pp.106-111), 14 (pp.114-118), 15 (pp.123-128), and 16
- O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 9 (recommended)

11/14: Analyzing Survey Data Using SPSS: Basic Tools for Hypothesis Testing (Chi-Square Test and Correlations)

- Cunningham and Aldrich, Chapters 19 and 23
- ❖ O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 9 (recommended)

11/21: Analyzing Survey Data Using SPSS: Basic Tools for Hypothesis Testing (Regression)

- Cunningham and Aldrich, Chapters 20 and 21
- ❖ O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 8 (recommended)

11/28: Thanksgiving

12/5: Communicating Findings

- O'Sullivan et al., Chapter 14
- ❖ A sample paper to be determined!

12/12: Final Exam

Final Research Project Due

*** I reserve the right to modify the contents of this syllabus. ***